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trated twenty ships of the enemy. The enemy would overwhelm one squadron of seven and deal likewise with each succeeding squadron as it came to the rescue, or seek each squadron out separately and sink it. Then our enemy could bring over his transports, unopposed. "Coast defense" vessels protect against individual raiders, but are no defense against concentrated attack.

The dispatch of July 10, 1917, shows that Secretary Daniels and Admiral Ransom contemplated sending our whole battle fleet abroad. This evidence is a realization that holding it here for a "coast defense" would be futile. But Daniels and Benson proposed to do this right thing only "when the emergency is deemed to warrant it"—that is, they proposed to keep our battle fleet over here and out of the war until an emergency, such as the breaking loss of the German fleet, had made the presence of our fleet in European waters manifestly imperative. They would not send the fleet over to prevent a German eruption, but only when the "emergency" of such an eruption had occurred. Oh stable door and empty stall!

Daniels and Benson, in A. D. 1917, are clearly out of the navy. Strategists by Herodotus, in B. C. 413, for the latter proposed to "put out instantly to sea with all the ships we have in readiness." Judged by the Herodotus standard, Daniels and Benson are some twenty-three centuries behind the times.

Thinking With the Emotions

In a recent address Job Hedges, the well known political philosopher, remarked on "the ease of adverse comment as compared with the difficulties of constructive thought." "Why don't 'they' do something?" has become a staple question in many companies—the aforesaid "they" being an unnamed congeries of persons resident nowhere.

So the manufacture of bettering proposals proceeds without much consideration of how they will work or whether they will work at all. "They" should and must develop the details. For example, in The Tribune's Platform Contest yesterday appeared a plank which said that before this country ever goes to war again the President shall present to the nation all the issues at stake and take a popular vote. But if the country is attacked Congress may declare a war of defense without a plebiscite.

The exception eats up the proposal. When is there an attack? Was the Lusitania murder an attack? Moreover, common sense tells us, as it told David Harum, that if you are about to be hit, the thing to do is to hit first. Could we debate a war issue if our prospective opponent did not and used the delay to arm to the teeth? The plank ignores the fact that with respect to armed conflicts no nation is a law to itself. Our forefathers, thinking difficult questions through, took note of practicalities. In our day we have an exceptionally large number of persons who rely on rhetoric and formulas to make the world right. In many American gatherings now doubtless a resolution would carry which said that no war could be embarked on except a plebiscite commanded it.

The New Milk Prices

Under the agreement between the officers of the Dairymen's League and the Milk Conference Board, representing the city's chief distributors, the dairymen is to receive, beginning April 1, 1.7 cents less per quart than the March price. Of this drastic reduction, a reduction which is likely to cause a great disturbance upstate and which may lead to a revolution in the management of the Dairymen's League, the public is to get the benefit of part. But not all, it appears, if the dark remarks of the milk companies about a higher cost of distribution mean anything.

It is established to the satisfaction of milk producers that they have not been getting too much, and it will be generally agreed that the new April price will surely not exceed the dairymen's costs. It is also established to the satisfaction of the distributing companies that they do business on a thin margin. No one seems to challenge the figures which show that their profit is less than one-half cent per quart. Hence the milkman's profit could be taken away altogether without much benefit to milk buyers.

So, if the dairymen is down to the minimum at which he will produce and the distributors make little per quart, the only rational prospect of cheaper milk is in more economical distribution. Three practical proposals have been made. First, the establishment of a milk monopoly that will get rid of many costs incident to competition; second, the abolition of the home delivery system and the substitution of one by which all must go to stations for milk supplies; third, interesting the morning newspaper vendors, who are

up early and make deliveries, in milk as a side line. But nothing along these lines or other practical ones is done by our rhetorical Mayor and our equally rhetorical Health Commissioner.

The Sermon in Spring

We doubt if there was ever a spring so thoroughly welcome and appreciated as that now graciously tripping in. Old gentlemen of forty have been seen to fling their hats in the air and cheer. A cold and sickly marrow it must be that isn't penetrated by the all-pervading warmth that enters right into one's inmost being and hangs up its hat there. As for external evidence, one can smile even at the prices—turn where you will there is only beauty and fun amid such weather. Never such a spring!

We set the moral down not so much in the thought that anybody will head it should another awful winter embrace us in its snowy bosom as for its bearing upon other drear and seemingly unendurable episodes of life. Nothing is as boring as that exquisite hour when a hint of green first paints the landscape—if you have had no winter to set against it. Ask any invalid who has ever pursued the spring northward—beginning at Egypt, let us say, and ending in England when it's April there. A rare, rare treat, you think? Far from it! Nothing is as monotonous, as deadly and depressing—not even the bleakest winter. Weather and life are alike in that both would be dull affairs without seasons and their contrast.

In short, where it is always spring there is no spring.

The New Railroad Era

Washington dispatches say that one of the striking features of the recent hearings before the Interstate Commerce Commission is the changed attitude of the shippers' organizations. Those bodies used to be, first, last and all the time, in favor of holding down freight rates. The experiences of the war seem to have greatly shaken their belief in the value of rock-bottom freight charges. Government operation, with its embargoes and excessive delays, and the manifest failure of the old commission management to provide for an expansion of transportation facilities have exploded the idea that paring rates for the sake of paring them always—pays in the long run.

Even in the early period of the war, before the United States entered it, the shippers had begun to see the light. They had become more liberal-minded than the majority of the Interstate Commerce commissioners. They saw that poor service was dear.

The loss to the country through an impoverished railroad service is always likely to overbalance the saving in freight bills. The war was needed to drive this lesson home to the shippers, who, after all, are only the nominal purchasers of transportation, since the cost is ultimately passed along to the consumer. Both shipper and consumer are better off if the carriers are operated efficiently and constant betterments are made possible by a little larger margin of return to the railroad.

The public generally has been educated to a clearer conception of the elements of the railroad problem. Only the Interstate Commerce Commission seems to remain under the spell of the old restrictive theory. It, too, may be able eventually to catch the spirit of the new railroad era.

Profit in a Fine

The existing peculiar conditions in the international money market can produce very strange and paradoxical phenomena. Here is a case in which the exchange actually transformed a punishment into a reward. In 1916 a man from across the Baden frontier was arrested in Switzerland for smuggling. He was released on a bail of 5,000 francs, which then cost him 7,500 marks. For some reason the case dragged on and was decided only quite recently. The accused was sentenced to a fine of 3,000 francs and 300 francs cost. He received, as the balance of his bail 1,700 francs, which he changed for 24,000 marks. Consequently, his little adventure brought him in a net profit of 16,500 marks. As one of the humors of the exchange this deserves to be coupled with the case of a Swiss brewery, which is said to have found it economical to label its beer bottles with Austrian kroner notes.

An All-Round Man

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: I stand for Leonard Wood as a candidate for the Republican party. He is the one all-round man we have, soldier, administrator, statesman and prophet of preparedness.

In Cuba and the Philippines he proved himself a first class administrator, always choosing the best heads of departments that it was possible to find. If he had not started the Plattsburg camps the war would have been prolonged, thereby causing losses of men and money impossible to calculate.

Why should we not elect a man for President who will do the best that is humanly possible? A REPUBLICAN.
Lakewood, N. J., March 16, 1920.

HUNTING THE PROFITEER

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Should the Death Penalty Go?

Tribune Readers Debate the Questions Raised by Editorial;
Majority for Abolition; Some Prefer Iowan Law

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I agree in every respect with your editorial on capital punishment, and this opinion is that of many of my friends. Sometimes the apathy of the people, as William Lloyd Garrison once said, is enough to "make every statue leap from its pedestal and hasten the resurrection of the dead." No one cuts off a sore thumb because he has a blister. It is foolhardy to send a man to eternity—to say nothing of the barbarity of the method—when that man is capable of producing useful things for the rest of mankind. Lay aside a place where those guilty of murder can be put to work at twelve hours a day, if necessary, to produce for those who can't afford to pay. What could be more simple or commonsensical?

And how contradictory are the professions and assertions of those who advocate capital punishment! Is Christ worshiped for the deaths he commanded? Is Portia hated because she spoke well of the quality of mercy? Is Lincoln revered because he condemned or pardoned?

And when it comes to deterrents—would not a Gyp the Blood have hesitated just as much in the presence of lifelong work for others without compensation as in face of a death chair? C. Z. CLEVELAND.
New York, March 22, 1920.

Part of Soviet Program

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: The interesting point in regard to the proposed abolition of capital punishment is merely that it is an inherent part of the program which has in view the sovieting of the United States. It will exempt traitors from the full penalty of their crimes. It will further soften and emasculate the nation, which is now suffering from alternate excesses of sentimentality and ferocity. Crime is increasing, resistance is decreasing. The law to command respect must have force behind it. Defend the law and study the fate of Russia, which prohibited vodka and abolished capital punishment and fell into the hands of the Germans unresistingly. JULIA T. WATERMAN.
Washington, D. C., March 22, 1920.

A Great Step

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: I believe the passage of the bill for abolishing the death penalty to be a great step in civilization. JOSEPHINE CLARA STEWART.
New York, March 22, 1920.

Death Penalty Defended

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: This writer fully believes in the theory that the community has the right to defend itself. This means capital punishment for those too turbulent to admit of control otherwise. No lengthy argument is needed in support of this view. Some years of my life were spent in North Carolina, where the death penalty was, and probably is now, applied to burglary at a steadily increasing number of people believed with Victor Hugo that "The law that dips its finger in human blood to write the commandment 'Thou shalt not murder,' is naught but an example

mit murder if interfered with or in order to escape detection. I believe that is a preventive of crime in that state.

It would perhaps be well to apply the Iowa system, say, for a term of years. But set up a rigid system of educational Americanization in all cities and large towns. FRANK E. EMERY.
New York, March 22, 1920.

Death a Deterrent

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: The death penalty is an effective deterrent for violent persons who care little for law or morals, but fear force. All penalties of the criminal law are for people who are inclined to go crooked when the policeman is not looking. Of legal deterrents to wrongdoing capital punishment is the greatest. "All that a man hath will he give for his life," Warden Wolfert, of Stillwater Penitentiary, said that he never knew a prisoner who was indifferent even to detention.

Objectors to the death penalty argue that man has not the right to deprive another of life—God's supreme gift—but in war the same persons approve the sacrifice of innocent millions, merely for the maintenance of a preferred government. Is the murderer's life more sacred than the patriot's?

The Bible declares "Whosoever sheddeth a man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," but some mushy philanthropists, who carry flowers to incarcerated fiends or build \$50,000 homes for dogs while children starve, would preserve, pardon or parole. Retain and enforce the death penalty, but remove faster the evil environments which create criminals and murderers.

H. N. PRINGLE.
Newark, N. J., March 23, 1920.

Lafayette's Appeal

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: May I, as a daily reader of your paper, express my appreciation of the enlightened attitude of your editorial of Monday, March 23, toward the bill now before the Legislature at Albany to abolish the death penalty in New York State.

Lafayette's appeal to the French Chamber of Deputies in 1830, "I shall demand the abolition of the death penalty until I have the infallibility of human judgment proved to me," has been brought home to us not only by the Stielow case, but by the recent action in The Tribune of the \$4,000 voted by the Mississippi State Legislature to Will Purvis for having faced the gallows for a crime of which he was ultimately exonerated. In countless cases it has also been shown that Henry Ward Beecher was right when he said: "While the fear of hanging does not deter men from crime, the fear of inflicting death deters many a jury from finding a just verdict and favors the escape of criminals." A steadily increasing number of people believe with Victor Hugo that "The law that dips its finger in human blood to write the commandment 'Thou shalt not murder,' is naught but an example

of legal transgression against the preceptor itself," and that reformation, rather than revenge, should be the object of our penology.

Statistics show that murder has decreased instead of increased in the states that have abolished this ancient and barbaric law. Let us hope that the Empire State will soon be numbered among them. PAULINE FLORENCE BROWER.
Harriman, N. J., March 23, 1920.

Sacredness of Life

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: I believe it is wrong for the state, as such, or for any member of the state to destroy or authorize the destruction of human life under any circumstances whatever. In other words, I believe in the sacredness of human life. ELINOR BYRNS.
New York, March 23, 1920.

The Iowan System

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: In one of our states where murder in the first degree was punishable by life imprisonment a certain criminal, duly convicted and imprisoned, broke jail and, in so doing, killed three guards. He was recaptured and returned to prison. Obviously, no additional punishment could be inflicted for this new and aggravated offense. Thus, this worthless criminal took no chances, as he was already suffering the maximum penalty under the law when he made his dash for freedom. He took three useful lives and for this triple murder suffered no penalty. Would such a law not encourage criminals to feel that they could commit murder with always the chance of escaping punishment by breaking jail or by pardon?

The Iowa provision permitting juries, upon conviction of murder in the first degree, to fix the penalty in aggravated cases, or those in which there was no reasonable doubt, at imprisonment or death, appears to me to be a good one. It seems a step forward, in line with the realization of a greater flexibility in the criminal law, and yet permits of inflicting the death penalty in cases where it seems to the jury to be the only adequate punishment.

Assuming the abolition of the death penalty and the fixing of life imprisonment as the maximum penalty, we are confronted with the problem of pardon. An executive, President or Governor, having the pardoning power is always subject to pressure in behalf of convicted criminals on the part of those flabby sentimentalists of whom Theodore Roosevelt said that their heads were as soft as their hearts. Plenty of persons can always be found who will sign any kind of a petition. Furthermore, the executive pardoning power is subject to abuse for political or personal reasons.

Let us consider two recent cases. Charles W. Morse, the so-called "Ice King," was convicted of a crime by a Federal jury and imprisoned in a Federal prison. His friends promptly bearded themselves to obtain a pardon and it was represented to President Taft that he was dying and therefore should be pardoned that he might not die in prison, though why that, even if

true, is a valid reason for liberating a duly convicted prisoner passes my comprehension. Less unreasoning hysterical sentimentalism and more carefully considered justice is what America needs. Yielding to this weak sentimentalism, President Taft had Morse examined by an army or a navy surgeon, I believe—I do not recall which—and this doctor reported him as having not long to live, whereupon the President pardoned him. Morse, upon being released, promptly reengaged in business. The Angel of Death had suddenly and miraculously lifted his shadow and passed on, presumably to another criminal desiring a pardon.

Now, what is the remedy? In all diffidence, I would outline a suggestion. Let the pardoning power be entirely taken from the Governor and vested in a Board of Pardons. From the nature of their work, requiring trained legal minds for the sifting of evidence and weighing of facts (questions of law in any given case having presumably been passed upon by the appellate tribunals), this board should be composed of members of the bar of conspicuous ability and, in order that this important body might draw to itself able men, who in their chosen profession are able to make handsome incomes, the salaries of the members of the Board of Pardons should be ample and, in addition, the members should have the right to continue the practice of their profession. This board would require high-minded, able men if it is to function properly, and some such provision is necessary to secure them. They should, like justices of the United States Supreme Court, be appointed by the executive, to wit, in this case, the Governor of this state, and should hold office during good behavior—practically for life. The law should further provide that no member of the Board of Pardons could be eligible to election to public office of any kind or to hold such during his incumbency in office or until, say, one year after his resignation from the board.

ROUGIER THORNE.
Glen Cove, N. Y., March 25, 1920.

Retards the Soul

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: In answer to your editorial of today I wish to say, in the most emphatic way, that I am opposed to the death penalty. There are many reasons, but one will do. It retards the evolution of the human soul. GEO. CARR.
Paterson, N. J., March 22, 1920.

Who Is Behind It?

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: Many of us are wondering what lies beneath the bill, so insidiously introduced, for the abolition of the death penalty. What can be the object for lessening the safeguards to society at this particular time when the state government has at last seen the wisdom of taking steps to curb the spread of anarchy, which unrestricted threatens to attack our homes and institutions?

What kind of men can they be who would spare the lives of such people as the murderers of the unarmed Rosenthal and the defenseless Brooklyn cashiers? In their expiation these murderers gave New York one of the most salutary lessons she has ever had.

Who wants a bill to spare the lives of those that take away life? To instance one of the murders recently committed in this city, by what right should the creature live who struck down a girl of seventeen with a crowbar? The death penalty is only provided for first degree murder.

In the case of a Bolshevik riot the state cannot make herself defenseless to punish murder by death; in such an event is she to await Federal interference by martial law and expose herself to all the dangers of procrustian interference?

The fact that a prisoner nearly suffered the death penalty through a miscarriage of justice would seem to point out a need of reform in the methods whereby his conviction was obtained, but it is hardly an argument for the abolition of the penalty itself. F. T.
New York City, March 25, 1920.

"Thou Shalt Not Kill"

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: In response to your invitation for an expression of views concerning the bill to abolish capital punishment in this state, I would say that I am in favor of the introduction of this penal reform. The right, under any circumstances, to deprive a human being of life belongs only to God, who has written in his divine code "Thou shalt not kill."

Of course, arguments pro and con as to whether the death penalty is a deterrent influence are in order, though the main and decisive and preliminary point to be settled is: Has any state, court, jury, or any other man or association of men, a valid and inherent right to take another man's life? But it may be said that Michigan, which abolished the death penalty in 1846; Wisconsin and Rhode Island, in 1862; and Maine, in 1887, have not found that murders are of more frequency than before the repeal was carried into effect; at least, this would seem to be the natural deduction. Capital punishment has been abolished in several European countries, while in others, though still provided for by law, it has been wholly or in part remitted in response to popular humanitarian sentiment.

CHARLES A. INGRAMHAM.
Cambridge, N. Y., March 23, 1920.

The Newest Tax
(From The Boston Herald)
The extravagance of our government is now taxing even the imagination.

A Week of Verse

The Passing Strange
(From The Yale Review)

SINCE moons decay and suns decline
How else should end this life of mine?
Water and saltness are not wine.

But in the darkest hour of night,
When even the foxes peer for sight,
The byre-cock crows; he feels the light.

So, in this water mixed with dust,
The byre-cock spirit crows from trust
That death will change because it must.

For all things change the darkness
changes,
The wandering spirits change their
ranges,
The corn is gathered to the granages.

The corn is sown again, it grows;
The stars burn out, the darkness goes.
The rhythms change, they do not close.

They change, and we, who pass like
foam,
Like dust blown through the streets of
Rome,
Change ever, too; we have no home.

Only a beauty, only a power,
Sad in the fruit, bright in the flower,
Endlessly erring for its hour

But gathering, as we stray, a sense
Of life, so lovely and intense,
It lingers when we wander hence.

JOHN MASEFIELD.

Jazz Fantasia
(From The Dial)

DRUM on your drums, batter on your
banjos,
sob on the long cool winding saxophones.
Go to it, O jazzmen.

Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of
the happy
tin pans, let your trombones ooze, and
go husha—
husha-hush with the slippery sand-paper.

Moan like an autumn wind high in the
lonesome treetops,
moan soft like you wanted somebody
terrible, cry like a
racing car slipping away from a motor-
cycle cop, bang-bang!

you jazzmen, bang altogether drums,
traps, banjos, horns,
tin cans—make two people fight on the
top of a stairway
and scratch each other's eyes in a clinch
tumbling down
the stairs.